

strong, moral leader and, like the rest of us, would have mourned the loss of an inspired beacon of progressive ideology.

I join my colleagues today from the New York delegation in sending condolences and sympathy to the entire Cuomo family, and know that Governor Cuomo's respected legacy will be a blessing to us all.

Mr. CROWLEY. I thank the gentle lady for her remarks. I thank all the members of the New York delegation, as well as Ms. PELOSI, the Democratic leader, for their remarks today and remembrance of the great Governor of the State of New York, Mario Cuomo.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity at the early age of 15 years of age to be engaged in, really, my first political campaign. My then-Uncle Walter Crowley, who was one of my political idols in life, along with a fellow by the name of Michael Dowd, were in charge of a portion of Queens County in terms of making sure that, I think, the Catholic vote came out for Mario Cuomo during the 1977 race for mayor of New York, which was famously won in that primary by Ed Koch. But that was not the only election that Mario Cuomo—and storied election—that Mario Cuomo was a part of. He had been a part of elections before that, and, lo and behold, in 1982 he once again found himself in a matchup between himself and Ed Koch, and Mario Cuomo prevailing in that statewide election.

At 15 years of age, I remember handing out literature at the churches in western Queens and southern Queens, and it really was my entree into a political life. Then, in 1984, as a student at Queens College, I interned in the office of then-Governor Cuomo. And what an experience that was to be working with Bob Sullivan, his storied pollster, but officially, on the official side, was working in the statistics office with Dick Starkey, a former reporter, a storied reporter in New York City; Marty Steadman; to have Tim Russert walk into the room. We all died because Tim Russert just walked into the room.

I can remember in 1986 when I was elected to the State assembly how supportive Mario Cuomo was to me as a young man, recommending me to travel around the world with ACYPL, to come here to Washington to get my feet wet as well, to get that Washington sense. I remember being on the second floor in 1988 in the Blue Room, what is known as the Blue Room where the Governor would give his budgets, anticipating his delving into, diving into the 1988 Presidential elections, only to have my heart broken when Mario Cuomo said he would not run in that election.

Mario Cuomo was tough. He had one of the biggest hearts I have ever come to know.

He had also gone to law school, my Uncle Walter, and there was an intimacy between the Crowleys and the Cuomo family in Queens County politics, one that exists to this day with

his son Andrew, as Governor, and my family as well.

Mario Cuomo always did the right thing. He always did the right thing. And Mario Cuomo had an incredible magnetism about him. I have never seen, outside of people who are Presidents of the United States, the kind of magnetic sense that Mario Cuomo emitted. People wanted to be around him. Whenever he was publicly out, he was walking in the street or at an event, it was hard to get near Mario Cuomo because everyone wanted to be around Mario Cuomo.

I was always nervous around Mario Cuomo, a healthy nervousness, but I was excited to be around him. I always wanted to be around him. I loved the man. I loved him dearly, although I never had enough time to be with him. As PAUL TONKO had said at the funeral—and what a beautiful funeral Mario Cuomo had, what an incredibly beautiful funeral—simple, yet elegant. That is how I describe it. His son Andrew and his entire family, how respectful they were of their father. And I think of the people who attended that funeral had to walk away knowing that these children, all of them, were raised so well: Andrew, Margaret, Madeline, Maria, and Christopher. And all their grandchildren, how they behaved. It was just remarkable, just wonderful to see the respect they had for their father and their grandfather, for their in-law.

But Andrew had said that his father told him you don't tell people what they want to hear—and I am paraphrasing. He told them you tell them what they need to hear. You told them what you wanted to tell them, the message you wanted to get across.

It wasn't always popular, the message of Mario Cuomo; but I do know that people, even when they disagreed with him, they respected him and they admired him because of his tenacity, because he believed in what he was saying.

□ 2030

I think what they respected about him was he was always consistent as well in his thoughts. We will miss Mario Cuomo. Queens County, his home borough, will miss him. The city of New York and the State of New York, and, I think, the country have lost a great statesman, someone who didn't look to the next election but looked to the next great issue that needed to be tackled, not only in New York, because New York in many respects is the leader of State legislators in the country; he was thinking nationally, he was thinking globally as well.

Mario Cuomo will forever be one of my heroes, as is Lincoln. Mario Cuomo was bipartisan. He loved Lincoln, a Republican, but was true to his own democratic principles and his party as well. There is not enough time to say everything about him. But, Mr. Speaker, I once again want to thank the delegation for their loyalty this evening

and being here for as long as they were, and the indulgence of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

OPPOSING RAPPROCHEMENT WITH CUBA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CARTER of Georgia). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am so humbled and pleased to see my colleagues who have turned out tonight at this late hour in a bipartisan manner to say that we reject the President's ill-advised treatment of the policy of rapprochement with the Cuban regime, and no one is better able and better equipped to talk about freedom and democracy and our fight for justice than Mr. CHABOT.

I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT), a senior member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and chairman of the House Small Business Committee.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to join with my colleague and friend, Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN, in opposition to the December 17 announcement by President Obama to change U.S. policy toward Cuba. We will also be joined by some of our other colleagues, and I want to particularly thank Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN for her leadership on all issues regarding Cuba. She has been a leader on this issue for a long, long time and will continue to be, I am sure.

This policy change was a unilateral decision made without consulting Congress and with complete disregard of long-term national security consequences. Similarly, the so-called prisoner exchange was terribly flawed.

In 2013, Secretary Kerry stated that swapping convicted Cuban spies for Alan Gross was off the table, testifying before Congress that since Mr. Gross was wrongly imprisoned, there was no equivalency to pursue a spy for spy tradeoff. Let us be clear: the freedom of Alan Gross is welcome news, but this exchange was totally one-sided. It was tragically flawed. It was not in the best interest of the people of the United States, and it was not in the best interest of the people of Cuba.

As my colleague, Representative ROS-LEHTINEN, has rightly highlighted these past few weeks since the decision and the prisoner exchange occurred, Cuban spies have been responsible for the deaths of American lives. It is absolutely true that they have been. And they have been released. Those are the people who were responsible for American deaths. Cuban patriots who have risked their lives every day to fight for basic rights and freedoms feel betrayed.

The exchange was flawed. The policy itself is flawed, and the announcement

has also let down one of the United States' strongest ally in the world, Israel. Year after year, Israel has stood at the United States' side—one of the very few—supporting the United States at the United Nations in 98 percent of all votes, including votes that the world's worst actors pushed through to condemn the U.S. embargo on Cuba.

Unfortunately, those who have long nourished and fostered cozy relationships with Cuba, most notably Russia and Venezuela and various terrorist organizations around the world, are welcoming the policy changes with open arms.

We need to be honest about the implications of President Obama's new policy. His unilateral decision to change Cuba policy poses a threat to U.S. national security. If the trade embargo is lifted, money will flow into the hands of the Castro brothers, allowing them to financially support surreptitious espionage activities with terrorist groups like Hezbollah and nations like North Korea.

Since the President made his public announcement, nearly 100 Cubans have already been detained. The United States should always stand for democracy and freedom around the world. We should demand that the Castro regime release all political prisoners and hold free and fair elections before establishing diplomatic relations.

I once again thank the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for her leadership in this area for many, many years, and it is an honor to speak this evening with her.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I thank the gentleman from Ohio very much, and thank you for looking out for our U.S. national security, and thank you for trying to uphold the values of freedom throughout the world.

Mr. CHABOT brought up the fact that Mr. Kerry, speaking before our committee, said that we would not release spies for Alan Gross' life. And that came because of a question posed by our next speaker, and I am pleased to yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SIREN), the ranking member of the House Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere.

Mr. SIREN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for allowing me to speak tonight.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my disappointment and deep concerns regarding the administration's plan for loosening the sanctions and initiating diplomatic discussions with the Cuban dictatorship. It is naive and misguided to think that this is going to give us the long-desired political and economic changes that the Cuban people deserve.

In fact, just a few days after the announcement, Raul Castro made sure to dispel any misgivings and brazenly declared that the regime would not abandon its communist path, let alone loosen its stranglehold over the people of Cuba. I feel that the administration has abandoned all those Cuban people for all those years who fought for

human rights and democracy in Cuba. I feel that those people who are still lingering in the Cuban jails are so disappointed in this administration's efforts.

You know, the Alan Gross release should have been something joyous. And we all wanted Alan Gross released because he was incarcerated for no reason other than he was foreign. But to release three Cuban spies or a network of spies that exists in this country currently is just not acceptable. Alan Gross should have been released on his own. He did nothing. He just went to Cuba to establish some sort of communication for this community.

The other thing that is troubling me, coming from New Jersey, is the fact that there was no discussion about any extradition of the criminals that are currently in Cuba. There are over 100 criminals in Cuba, including Joanne Chesimard, who killed a State trooper in New Jersey point blank 30 years ago. She escaped to Cuba. She has been enjoying the sun, she has been enjoying the beach. Meanwhile, Trooper Werner Foerster's family for over 30 years grew up without a father. And yet we can't seem to get this government to think that it is important that we bring these people to justice. As a matter of fact, the FBI has named Joanne Chesimard as number one in the list of terrorists that they want back.

So to me it was very disappointing because the people of New Jersey, after all these years, are still trying to bring this woman to justice.

People tell me, well, we negotiate and we trade with Vietnam, we trade with China. We trade with other countries. And I say this: that is not the island that I want in Cuba. We haven't helped Vietnam's people at all. There is still no freedom, and there are human rights abuses. You look at China, it is the same thing. You look at North Korea, it is the same thing. I don't want that for the island where I was born. And I surely don't want that kind of government 90 miles away from this country. You know, the history of Cuba, all in the past 50 years of this dictatorship, has been one to try to hurt this country as much as it can, and I certainly don't want that 90 miles from this country.

The administration with this effort has taken away what we believe was a pressure point on a communist dictatorship 90 miles from this country. It has taken away how we can pressure this island. First of all, Russia can't help them any more. Russia used to help Cuba to the tune of \$4 billion a year. Venezuela can't any more. Venezuela is falling apart. There are 30,000 Cubans in Venezuela trying to create the same type of country that we have in Cuba.

And at this point, we take away this pressure and basically give millions of dollars to this dictatorship. People may not know it, but any time anybody sends any money to Cuba, the Cuban government keeps 30 percent of

it. So if you raised it from \$500 to \$2,000, you tell me how many millions that is going to be. When you go to all of the beaches and to the restaurants, that is all government owned. In Cuba, if you want to set up a business, you have to negotiate with the government.

If I want to set up a business and I need 100 workers, I don't go out and get 100 workers, I go out and speak to the government and the government tells me you have to pay \$15 an hour. They in turn give those workers \$2–3 an hour. That is not helping the Cuban people in their economics. That is not helping them move forward.

So I think it is really naive to think that these kinds of changes are going to help. You know, I can only think back when I was young, and I came to this country at the age of 11. I remember when they took all of the books out of the school system and started the indoctrination process. I remember the military coming into my house and they took inventory. My mother and father were poor people, but they took inventory of everything that was in the house. And they threatened my parents that if anything was missing at the time we got our visa, it would be revoked.

This is not the country that I want for Cuba. I want a country with democracy. I want a country where human rights are observed. And yet, for 50 years this dictatorship has been killing.

People talk about Raul Castro as some sort of a changer. People forget that Raul Castro and Che Guevara were the ones who set up the firing squads in Cuba that killed thousands of people. Thousands of people were killed by the firing squads.

So I rise today in total disappointment, and I hope that this administration sees that this is not the way forward, that this is a hardened dictatorship, and that the only way we can deal with this dictatorship is through pressure. Through pressure is the only way to deal with these people, especially at this time. There is nobody that is going to come out and bail out Cuba.

□ 2045

Just last year, they were funneling arms to North Korea right in our backyard. Is this the kind of government we want 90 miles from our shores?

I thank my good friends for having this hour, allowing me to express my sentiments, and I thank all my colleagues who are here speaking with the same approach.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, as you heard from Mr. SIREN, he was born and reared in Cuba, but you don't have to be a Cuban American to understand the principles that are at stake here. One person who knows that is a wonderful congressman from our great State of Florida. So I am proud to yield to the gentleman from Florida, GUS BILIRAKIS.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you for holding this very important Special Order.

Way back in the Florida Legislature, when I was a member of the Cuban Caucus, so proud to be a member of the Cuban Caucus, I started speaking out against the Castro brothers' brand of oppression.

Over the past 5 years, I joined with all of you to decry Alan Gross' arrest. I am thankful for his recent release. Alan Gross' freedom was long overdue, we all agree. I am glad he is safely on U.S. soil, but a large injustice remains: the plights of Cuban citizens, who have suffered for over five decades under the Castro regime in search of basic human rights and political freedoms that we as Americans, frankly, take for granted.

Then, almost out of nowhere, the Obama administration decides to normalize relations with Cuba. This will allow American dollars to the rescue of the Castro brothers at a critical time.

Their normal economic benefactors—Russia and Venezuela—cannot afford to help. Now, more than ever, economic sanctions can be used as an effective tool to force the Castro regime to afford basic human rights and political freedoms to all of Cuba's citizens.

Scholars have noted that normalizing our economic policy with oppressive countries, like China or Vietnam, have produced no significant improvements in human rights treatment.

Given the precedent, there is no reason to believe the situation with Cuba will yield significant different results. In fact, we already know that the suffering for Cuba's citizens will continue, unfortunately. Raul Castro proclaimed that there would be no renunciation of any of their principles. Cuban restrictions on free speech, assembly, and press will remain. They proved it just this last week.

Travel and tourism will remain strictly controlled by the Castro regime. Tourism dollars that Americans will spend will go directly to the oppressors.

We cannot ignore the sense of betrayal that Cuban defectors feel in response to the President's plan. We should be demanding genuine freedom: release of all political prisoners, universal human rights, Democratic principles, and a free market for the Cuban people.

In order to ensure the citizens of Cuba stand a chance to benefit from this ill-advised agreement, Cuba's despots must relinquish control and eradicate their tools of tyranny. Actual human rights reforms must occur before any commercial or political normalization takes place.

I will continue to monitor the actions on the island in search of positive movement.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. BILIRAKIS, I thank you for your clear and consistent message that restrictions should not be lifted against the Castro regime until those conditions are met.

Our next speaker, Mr. Speaker, is the gentleman from Alabama, Congressman BRADLEY BYRNE, who so under-

stands that good trade is based on free and fair countries that cherish the principles upon which our great country was founded—freedom, democracy, respect for the rule of law—all of which are missing in today's Cuba. His great city of Mobile, Alabama, will greatly benefit once we have free trade and fair trade with a Democratic Cuba. I yield to the gentleman from Mobile, Alabama.

Mr. BYRNE. I thank the gentlewoman, both for your time and for your leadership on this very important issue.

As she said, I represent Mobile, Alabama. If you go and look at a map, it is a straight shot north from Havana to Mobile. For over three centuries, Mobile has been a major port for the export of goods and import of goods back and forth between Cuba and the United States. It is in the economic best interest of the people in my district for us to get to the point where we have normalized relations and trade with Cuba.

I should be ardently in favor of this deal that the President is pursuing, but I am not. This is not the time, these are not the circumstances, and—to put it simply—this is not the way to do this.

Let me address the way for a moment. It has been alluded to previously that we have done deals with China and with Vietnam. In both cases, the Presidents involved worked with Congress. That is critically important to whatever success they have had in both of those deals.

In this circumstance, the President has refused to work with Congress. You can't reach the sort of agreement that he is looking for without Congress. You can't have an embassy unless we are willing to pay for it. You can't have an ambassador unless the Senate approves the ambassador.

He is pursuing what, in essence, is an errand that cannot result in success that he is looking for, but he is pursuing it anyway without us because this is just another example of these efforts to make these unilateral, executive-type decisions, leaving Congress to decide to try to keep itself relevant as he becomes a lameduck President. That is no way to do this.

Let me address the circumstances. I can't say it any better than the prior speakers have said it. This is a brutally oppressive regime that cannot change, and until they change, until they put in motion the things that we are talking about for change, I don't see how a country like the United States can seriously engage in negotiations with them.

Most importantly, for me, from my perspective, I serve on the House Armed Services Committee—I don't think I have to tell everybody here the history of this country—this country with this regime in charge allowed the then-Soviet Union to put nuclear missiles aimed at the United States on their soil. They have never apologized for that; they have never renounced that.

As we heard earlier, just a year ago, they were caught redhanded in an arms deal with the North Koreans, who are presently enemies of the United States. What sort of assurance do we have as part of this deal that Cuba is not going to be a staging ground for military activity, terrorist activity, against the people and the security of the United States of America? Nothing, nothing; yet we engaged in this deal, a very bad deal from my perspective—and I don't want to take anything away from the American citizen who we were able to bring back home—but look who we traded in return for that.

It reminds me of the Bergdahl deal we had last year that was so very controversial. This administration doesn't know how to make a good deal. They know how to give everything away and get very little back.

I want to normalize relationships with Cuba. I want us to open up that trade again because it is going to benefit my district.

I am willing to do anything I can to help make that happen, but this country should never give in to people like the Castro brothers until there is a change in that regime, until there is a change in the Government of Cuba, until they renounce their activities that have been against the security of the United States, until we know that we have a good faith trading partner and a good faith partner, period, in this hemisphere.

I look forward to the day when I can stand at the Port of Mobile and welcome goods coming in from Cuba and goods going out from Mobile to Cuba as part of a deal that is made in the right way, under the right circumstances, for the right reason. I hope and pray that that day comes, but that day is not today.

I thank the gentlewoman for her leadership. I look forward to continuing to follow that leadership in the days to come.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much. I am so thankful to my good friend from Mobile, Alabama, for his words, because he understands that American principles are not for sale.

I would like to point out, Mr. Speaker, that every country with whom the Castro brothers do business is a country to whom they owe a lot of money. They have not paid all of their bills to any businesses, and they have not paid what they owe to any country, and it would be all the same for Mobile, Alabama. Thank you for standing up for U.S. values.

Now, I am so pleased to yield to my good friend from South Carolina, a gentleman who understands the threat to our hemisphere. Why? Because he is the chairman of the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DUNCAN), my good friend.

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. I thank the gentlewoman from Florida for her leadership on this issue, not just today, but for her whole tenure in Congress.

As the new chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, I was grateful to see the return of Alan Gross to the United States last month after 5 years of unjust imprisonment in Cuba. The announcement over this past weekend that the Cubans freed 53 prisoners was also welcome news.

Nevertheless, I have major concerns with the way this administration, the Obama administration, conducted negotiations and the way the decision was made to radically alter longstanding U.S. policy towards Cuba.

The administration failed to consult Congress, failed to consult any Cuban dissidents or civil society in its decision to embark on its new course in Cuba. The administration says this decision will empower the Cuban people; yet softening U.S. policy without concrete Cuban reforms will only boost the Castro regime and government and facilitate the survival of the communist regime.

We need to focus not on what is best for the Cuban Government, the Castro regime, we need to focus on what is best for the Cuban people.

I ask you this: Will this deal mean more self-governance for the Cuban people? Will it mean more economic freedom for those who strive to innovate, those that are entrepreneurial within the Cuban society? Will they be able to start more businesses and have economic freedom? Will there be more religious freedom for the Cuban people? Will there be more rights to free speech? Are the Cuban people seeing this debate tonight on Cuban TV? Are the Cuban people able to access the Internet and watch what we are doing via YouTube or any other media? These are rhetorical questions, but I answer them with “no,” based on my understanding.

I recall it was only 1 week after the announcement of this U.S.-Cuba deal that the Cuban Government cracked down on peaceful protestors in Havana's Revolutionary Square. I point to that as evidence that it is still a closed communistic society.

In conclusion, the administration's decision is a reward to the communist dictatorship at the expense of the Cuban people. This action is especially disgraceful when we consider the administration's disrespect toward our friend and ally in Canada by vowing to veto legislation approving the construction of the Keystone pipeline.

These are issues that require vigorous congressional oversight. I look forward to working with the ranking member, Mr. SIREs, that you just heard from, as we hold hearings in the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere in the coming weeks and month.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. DUNCAN. We are so pleased that we have this dynamic duo of the chairman and the ranking member of Western Hemisphere. You are so right to point out, Mr. DUNCAN, that there is no freedom of the press in Cuba. That

is one of the many freedoms that Cuban people are denied.

Now, I yield to my colleague from Florida, Congressman RON DESANTIS, who is a war veteran, but who understands that the war for freedom and democracy takes on many fronts, a member of our House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. DESANTIS. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to recognize my colleague from Florida because she is just not only on the House floor fighting for freedom for the Cuban people, with whom she obviously has ancestral relations, she fights for freedom for everybody. Whether it is in Venezuela or Iran, she is there; you can set your clock to it.

When I first heard about these concessions, I was really scratching my head. I texted some of my colleagues, and I was like: “We are not really getting anything for this.”

Sure enough, Raul Castro goes out, talks to the people, and says: “We are not changing. We are not changing anything.” They are staying exactly with the values that they have been with from the beginning, which are antagonistic to freedom, antagonistic to everything we hold dear in the United States.

□ 2100

You know, when you look at countries like Cuba, a lot of times you don't even need to get into the nitty-gritty. There are just certain signs where you know the nature of the regime. For example, when you look at communism in Eastern Europe, you don't have to look at the daily life or any of that. You just look at the fact that there was a Berlin Wall that kept people in like caged animals. If you look at the differences between North and South Korea, all you have to do is look at that satellite photo at night, where South Korea is lit up like a Christmas tree and North Korea is a land of darkness and despair.

For me, when I think of what is the nature of the Cuban regime, I think all you need to know is that you have tens of thousands of people living in Cuba. It is a nice island, it has great weather, and they are suffocated so much that they are willing to swim across 90 miles of shark-infested waters—the Florida Straits—knowing that they are probably going to die. That is all you need to know.

This is a Stalinist regime. And as my colleague from Alabama mentioned, the Cuban missile crisis wasn't even just that there were nuclear weapons in Cuba pointed at the United States. Fidel Castro was telling Khrushchev to fire them into the United States. We actually were fortunate that Nikita Khrushchev was actually the cooler head in that. So if Castro had his way, there would have been nuclear weapons sent here. And so this is the nature of the regime.

So what are you doing with this policy? To me, I look at it very simply. I

think this fact is true. Every single dollar spent in Cuba benefits the Castro regime. Every single dollar. Europe doesn't have restrictions. Most of the other world doesn't have restrictions. Have the Cuban people benefited from that? Has their standard of living gone up? No. This all goes to benefit the government.

To me, this is the worst possible time to throw the Castro regime a lifeline. If you look at what is happening in Caracas, if you look at what is happening in Moscow, these regimes are buckling because of the decline in the price of oil.

So this is a moment of profound weakness for the Castro regime. And giving them these concessions is exactly what the Castro regime wants. I am scratching my head trying to figure out: What do we get in return for this?

The Americans who had property seized when Castro took power, are any of them getting their property back? No.

What about the Cuban Americans who had to flee? They had their businesses taken, property taken. Are any of them going to get any type of recompense? Of course, not.

What about freedom of speech, political rights, the ability to participate in political life and criticize those in power? Is that being extended to the Cuban people? Not on your life. Nothing.

I will say, it is interesting—and my colleague from Florida mentioned this—the dismal credit rating that Cuba has. They don't pay back any loans. Are we then going to extend Export-Import Bank loans that are backed by the taxpayer to do business in Cuba? The American taxpayer is going to have to end up paying for that. That is not a good source of business for our taxpayers.

The tragedy of this is we have given away leverage that could have come in handy. These Castro brothers are on their last legs. When they finally leave the scene, we want to use the leverage we have to leverage a democratic transition. Instead, we are essentially normalizing status quo. So if the Stalinist dictatorship survives beyond the Castros due to U.S. support, you are going to have 11 million Cubans who are consigned to another generation of tyranny.

I will just say one more thing. When I read the media coverage—and I think I can say this because I am not from south Florida—the coverage is so negative about Cuban Americans who fled Castro. They say: Oh, they're living in the past. This is anachronistic, all this stuff.

For me, the people that I want to talk to to know the true nature of the regime are the people who suffered under the regime, the people who were forced to flee and who had family members killed, had family members in prison. That, to me, is the number one source of information that I would look to.

And so the media frames it as if somehow the American policy is anachronistic. I think it is the Castro regime, based on Stalinist principles, that is anachronistic, and yet it continues to lumber on. And the tragedy of this is that we are giving them a critical lifeline so that they can continue having their country governed like a political prison.

So I appreciate you organizing this, my colleague in Florida. We are giving speeches here tonight, but we need to act in this body, and we need to show that this policy does not represent the will of the American people and does not represent what is best for people in Cuba that are struggling for freedom.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. DESANTIS. You are so right when you categorized this unilateral bad deal as an economic lifeline to the Castro regime.

A person who understands that just as well as you do is our next speaker, the gentleman from Iowa, a senior member of the House Committee on Agriculture, Congressman STEVE KING. He can say: Hey, my State is going to benefit a lot by this deal.

The sad reality, as Mr. KING and I know, is that Castro doesn't pay his debt. As we had just said with the other speaker, he owes everybody money. This deal will not strengthen U.S. national security. It will not be good for America's farmers, and it will not be good for the people of Cuba.

Congressman KING.

Mr. KING of Iowa. I thank the gentlewoman from Florida for organizing this Special Order, and I associate myself with her words and her position and also that of the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DESANTIS). I didn't, Mr. Speaker, realize how much was in him about this issue. It was instructive for me to listen to that stream forward.

I have had the privilege of serving here in this Congress with a good number of Members that do a great job of representing the interests of the Cuban people, and I also had the privilege of going to Cuba on a legal trip some years ago before I came to this Congress. But I would take you back, Mr. Speaker, to a time in 1959 and trace some of this history.

The revolution against Batista in 1959 was back before we had as many replays on television as we have today. And I recall watching the revolution in Cuba, and as Castro took over, as the promise came that they were going to bring democracy to Cuba—that was the promise. It was going to be democracy; it was going to be free and fair elections, a government of, by, and for the people of Cuba; and they were going to choose their leadership.

But I remember seeing on television the videos of the people who were lined up against the wall and executed without a proper trial, executed without true justice. I remember in particular—it is branded in my memory—a man who insisted: If you are to shoot me here in front of this wall, let me give

the order for my own execution. And he stood there in a Cuban shirt down to here—white pants, white shirt—and he raised his hand and faced the firing squad and dropped his own hand. That was the signal to the firing squad. They fired. He was shot to death in front of that wall, along with many, many others.

We don't know at this point how many political prisoners have been executed, how many have died in custody. We have got a list of some; we don't have a list of all. But we know this: it has never been, since that time in 1959, a government of, by, and for the people of Cuba.

And the hope that there will be the day that the Cuban people would be free was manifested—or at least attempted to be manifested—at the Bay of Pigs. I would have liked to have seen the air cover that would have made that be successful. We didn't get that. But we look for the day to come ever since that the Cuban people could be free. The Cuban people could be free.

Since that time, there has been the nationalization of the real property, which we heard from Mr. DESANTIS. At the time that Castro took control of Cuba, 25 percent of the real estate in Cuba was owned by Americans. They held deeds to that property. There was other land in Cuba that was owned by people from other nationalities.

Every other country was compensated for their real estate, except Americans. No American that I know of has been compensated for their real estate. They hold those deeds to this today, sometimes a second generation.

Before I came to this Congress, while I was there, there was also a situation where the exchange rate for Cuban peso to dollar was 21 to 1 at that time. And so if anyone achieved an American dollar, they could take it into a dollar store and they would get one peso's worth of goods for it or they could deposit it into a Cuban bank and they would get one peso for that. That is a 20-peso difference. And that is one of the things that supported the Castro regime financially.

Another thing that happened was sugar was 6 cents a pound. The Russians paid them 52 cents a pound in oil for the sugar. That was a subsidy of Cuba. When the Soviet Union—it was the Soviet Union rather than just the Russians—collapsed, then the subsidy for Cuba also collapsed and the Cuban economy was no longer propped up.

You saw Russian tractors sitting out there, having been stripped for parts, in the only country in the world I know that had gone from mechanized agriculture to animal husbandry agriculture because their machines no longer worked. And the taxicabs are driven by doctors, with a five-cylinder Russian diesel under the hood of a 1954 Chevrolet.

This country has been frozen in time. It has a collapsed and failed economy. It has been propped up by the subsidy of, first, the Soviet Union, and then

later on, the Venezuelans, who are collapsing, themselves, today.

This is a country of people that are vigorous people. They are an outgoing, hardworking, I will say, gregarious people. I thought I would see people down there that had the thousand-yard hopeless stare. I am sure that exists. But I also saw people that worked hard and they kept their chin up and they kept a smile on their face.

I thought, If these people could be unleashed, if they could be unleashed by the heartbeat of freedom, if we could just get them that opportunity to be who they are, they would become a very, very successful island and trading partner and a nation unto themselves and, one day, an ally of the United States.

So my dream has been to help them with that opportunity, and my dream has been to one day swim ashore at the Bay of Pigs and walk out and wade onto a free Cuba, with a free Cuban.

But, Mr. Speaker, the Cuban people have been burdened with more than five decades of Marxist slavery that they have had to face. And this policy of the President's that comes right on the cusp of what is likely the biological solution in Cuba, which would be the end of the Castro brothers that would come along naturally and the opportunity to bring about a regime change in Cuba, the President of the United States may well have handed Cuba another 50 years of living in Marxist slavery when he had just the opportunity for them to be free.

So our policy here in this Congress, I am hopeful, is the policy that says: regime change in Cuba and a government of, by, and for the people of Cuba. And I, one day, hope and pray to do what I have said with my colleagues here and many others, and that is swim ashore at the Bay of Pigs and wade out on the shore of a free Cuba.

God bless them all.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. KING. That is our fervent hope as well. And we work and we pray every day for that dream of a free Cuba to come alive. We thank you for your voice here tonight. Thank you, my good friend from Iowa.

Mr. Speaker, many people talk about the last generation of Cuban exiles and how this is really not the dream of young Cuban Americans who were born here in the United States, reared here in the United States. They come from Cuban families, but they really don't much care about freedom and democracy and the land of their ancestors.

This next speaker, Mr. Speaker, is a newly elected gentleman who understands that that search for a free and democratic Cuba is a yearning that lives very fervently in his heart, and that is the Congressman from West Virginia, Congressman ALEX MOONEY, who was born here, as American as apple pie, but comes from a proud lineage of Cuban American heritage.

Thank you, Mr. MOONEY.

Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia. I want to thank Congresswoman ILEANA

ROS-LEHTINEN for arranging this important Special Order to show solidarity with the Cuban people as they continue to live under an oppressive regime.

Mr. Speaker, President Obama has senselessly yielded ground, with no stipulations for reform, to the Cuban regime, with the announcements of a secret deal going around Congress to “normalize” relations. This misguided grab for a legacy item has cost our country and the Cuban people a valuable bargaining chip for their freedom.

Of course, this is yet another foreign policy failure or, more accurately, unilateral surrender from this administration. From the bright red line in Syria, which was crossed with impunity, to sending a secret message to President Putin that, “After the election, I will be more flexible,” to now rewarding tyrants in Cuba who continue to deny basic human rights to their oppressed citizens, President Obama has chosen wrong policies.

The despotic government the President would normalize relations with has, for decades, sought to subjugate the Cuban people's appetite for freedom. The many realized American Dreams of Cuban refugees, including my mother, are a great testament to the greatness of the United States and our constitutional rights. As the beacon of freedom in the world, America must continue to use sensible policy to protect our values around the world and in our own backyard.

□ 2115

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. MOONEY. We are a better Congress for you being a part of it. Thank you so much for being proud of your American heritage and your Cuban American ancestry as well. So, welcome to Congress, sir.

Mr. Speaker, I am about to introduce another millennial, another one of this younger generation of Cuban Americans who the press continues to say don't represent the desires of this new generation.

Well, CARLOS CURBELO is one of our newest elected officials. He was born here in the United States, doesn't know Cuba, and is less than 35 years old but understands that yearning for a free Cuba. We are so pleased as punch to have him here as a Member of our Congress.

I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. CURBELO).

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. I thank the gentlelady for yielding, and I thank her for her tireless advocacy and work on this very, very important cause.

Mr. Speaker, during the 56 years of the Cuban tragedy, also known as the Cuban Revolution, there had always been two constants.

First, the nature of the Castro regime, a dictatorship that brutally represses its own people, and that aggressively opposes U.S. national security interests throughout the globe. That has not changed.

The second was that, to varying degrees, the occupant of the White House had always been on the side of the Cuban people and in opposition to their oppressors, who for decades have collaborated with America's most dangerous allies. Today, this is, regrettably, no longer the case.

By trading an American hostage, cruelly held by Cuba's dictators for 5 years, for three criminals convicted of spying against our government, including one who was serving a lifetime sentence for conspiring to murder American citizens, the President sent a message to our enemies that the United States can be extorted.

What was the Cuban government's reward for holding an American hostage for 5 years? Three convicted spies and full diplomatic relations, plus an economic bailout for a financially and morally bankrupt regime.

The men who rule Cuba today are the same men who had nuclear missiles installed on the island and pointed them at the United States, as my colleague from Alabama stated earlier. When they were cash-rich, they ran a robust military and deployed troops throughout the world to fight alongside our most dangerous enemies.

They have trained and supported terrorist groups such as Colombia's FARC. They ordered three American citizens and one resident blown out of the sky in the tragic shootdown of February 24, 1996.

A few months ago, they were caught shipping arms illegally to North Korea, and they collaborated with the Venezuelan government in last year's brutal crackdown, which resulted in the death of over 40 students.

Human rights atrocities by the dictatorship against its people continue. The Castro regime consistently resorts to violence because they know it is the only way they can maintain control since the Cuban people are desperate to be free.

The President's decision to ease sanctions only serves to bolster the dictatorship and its apparatus of repression. There is virtually no private sector in Cuba. More than 85 percent of Cubans work for government controlled-enterprises and earn less than \$20 a month.

Foreign investment doesn't benefit the average Cuban. Cubans that work for corporations with foreign capital are only allowed to keep 8 percent of their salaries. Cuban workers are, in effect, slaves of the dictatorship.

Now, it is important to note, Mr. Speaker, President Obama's administration approved sanctions in recent months against Venezuela and North Korea. Why, then, is it rewarding an enemy of the United States just 90 miles from our shores that actively collaborates with both of these regimes?

Why does the President insist on an incoherent foreign policy that too often rewards our enemies and punishes our allies?

As other American Presidents have shown us in the past, peace through

weakness and appeasement is not an effective strategy for dealing with Cuba's military dictatorship.

We also have to ask ourselves, what kind of neighborhood do we want to live in?

The Americas, the Western Hemisphere, is the American neighborhood of the world. What kind of standards do we want for this part of the world?

Do we want to endorse the chronic abuse of human rights, the imprisonment of people who disagree?

That is the nature of the Cuban government, and we, the United States of America and, by the way, the other nations of this hemisphere, have agreed that we support a democratic form of government, and that we want this part of the world to be free without exception. There is one glaring exception, and it is Cuba.

Our sanctions policy, some say, well, it hasn't worked. Of course the sanctions have worked. The sanctions have denied billions and billions and billions of dollars to a regime that would use those profits to oppose our interests throughout the world.

What did the regime do when it had resources?

It had troops all over the world. It exported revolution. And if you don't know what exporting revolution means, in the context of Cuba, it means aggressively opposing American interests throughout the world.

Today, we remember in a very special way, Mario Manuel de la Pena, Carlos Costa, Armando Alejandro, and Pablo Morales. These were the men who were brutally assassinated by the Cuban regime on February 24 of 1996.

One of the spies was convicted of conspiring to murder these young men, three of whom were American citizens, and the other was a resident of our country. These four men are dead, and the Cuban spies are free.

But it isn't too late, Mr. Speaker. The President still has time to get back on the right side of this issue and on the right side of history by standing against Cuba's dictators, with the victims of their brutality, and for a strong American foreign policy that advances our national security interests.

Again, I want to thank my distinguished colleague from south Florida for her leadership. We have admired her for so many years for her work on this issue.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. CURBELO. You are a fresh young voice, and I thank you and Mr. MOONEY for being here tonight.

Mr. Speaker I am so pleased to yield to a gentleman who understands what freedom is all about. He was one of the speech writers for our great President, Ronald Reagan. He is a senior member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. In fact, he is the chairman of the Europe Subcommittee, and he is here tonight with one of his triplets, Christian, who wants to be an author and an inventor.

I look at Christian, this new generation, and I think, what kind of life

would he have under the communist tyranny of Cuba, as opposed to the freedom and democracy that we enjoy here?

So with that, I am pleased as punch to yield to my good friend from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER).

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much.

America is about to send a message to the world exactly on whose side are we on, and I am very proud to stand here with my colleagues, standing on the side of liberty, of justice, of treating people decently, of government that serves the people rather than a systematic government that requires the people to serve them, the bureaucracy, the tyrants that hold power.

That is what this is all about. Let's get an understanding of who this Castro gang is. Castro murdered the freedom fighters who overthrew the dictatorial government of Batista back in the 1950s.

Castro, himself, took people out who had fought against the dictatorship of Batista and shot them in the head. These were people that risked their lives to bring democracy to Cuba, and this man co-opted their revolution.

He has allied himself, over the years, with gangsters and tyrants throughout the world. He has had a safe haven for the drug dealers of Latin America, who look to him as the moderator of any disputes between these monstrous gangsters who murder each other and murder anyone who gets in their way.

He has allied with these drug dealers. But also, during the cold war he was allied to the hilt to the communist movement throughout the world. He wanted his country to become a nuclear base to attack and drop nuclear bombs on the people of the United States.

Let's not forget that. This is the man who wanted to kill Americans by the millions. For us now, oh, well, that is history; let bygones be bygones.

Are you kidding me?

This is the guy that we need to send a message to. When people have that much hatred of the United States, undermine the freedom of the people in of the world, we are not just going to sit aside and forgive him of these things.

Oh, by the way, he is not even asking for forgiveness. The Castro regime is just saying, accept us as we are, a country that has had more political prisoners than almost any other country of this hemisphere, and we are just going to accept them as they are.

Well, remember, when people were struggling during the cold war against communism, Castro was on the wrong side. During the cold war, he was the one who wanted to kill Americans by the millions by having Soviet missiles in his country.

Finally, what does this agreement that this administration—what will be the effect of it?

Oh, yeah, they say, we have been told, well, if you just have free trade people are going to get better. There is going to be liberalism.

I call this the "hug a Nazi, make a liberal" theory. The fact is that Fidel Castro, just like the Chinese Communists, I might add, no matter how much trade we have, they will manipulate it so that the clique that is in power, the clique that has been able to monstrously oppress their own people, take that wealth, manipulate that wealth that is coming into the country to cement their own power.

It is very clear what this man has and his clique have in mind, and that is continuing their oppression of the Cuban people.

Let's not be partners to that. Let us again, stand for liberty, stand for justice.

The Soviet Union has fallen. It is time for Castro and communism in Cuba to fall as well.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. ROHRABACHER. And you so rightly point out that hours after President Obama announced, in a shocking way, that we would resume diplomatic relations with Cuba and the Castro regime does not have to change, Raul Castro put on his military uniform and spoke to the oppressed island nation and said, hey, don't worry. We are not changing a thing. It is still the same failed regime.

We got nothing from that deal.

Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART), the chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development. I had the honor of serving with his older brother. I have the honor of serving with his youngest brother now, MARIO. Born in the United States and, just like Carlos and ALEX MOONEY, Mr. CURBELO and Mr. MOONEY, a gentleman who is 100 percent American and so proud of 100 percent of his Cuban ancestry.

Thank you, Mario.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Let me first thank you, Madam Chairwoman, for your leadership. As we heard tonight, your leadership in the cause of freedom does not stop at the shores of Cuba. Wherever there is repression and oppression, there is the clear concise voice of Chairwoman ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, as we have heard again tonight.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot. And I know that the time is getting short, but I want to quote somebody whom we have not quoted, as far as I remember here tonight, and this is President Obama. When Mr. Obama was running for President he stated what the right policy, what his policy would be to deal with the Cuban tyranny.

He said: "My policy towards Cuba will be guided by one word, 'libertad'—freedom. And the road to freedom for all Cubans must begin with justice for Cuba's political prisoners, the right of free speech, a free press, freedom assembly, and it must lead to elections that are free and fair."

Mr. Obama went on to say: "I will maintain the embargo. It provides us

with the leverage to present the regime with a clear choice. If you take significant steps towards democracy, beginning with the freedom of all—all—political prisoners," Mr. Obama said, "we will take steps to begin normalizing relations. That is the way to bring about real change in Cuba," Mr. Obama said, "through strong, smart principled democracy."

□ 2130

Mr. Speaker, in essence, that day, then-candidate Obama, Senator Obama, and now-President Obama drew a red line about what the right policy was to deal with the Cuban regime; sadly, on December 17, President Obama announced that he was breaking that promise, that he was, once again, crossing—breaking—his own red line.

We have heard tonight that we have also heard from the vast majority of the pro-democracy leaders within the island who are struggling. They have objected to President Obama's change of policy. Mr. Speaker, if President Obama doesn't want to do it for the sake of a future of freedom for the Cuban people, he should stand firm for the sake of the national security interests of the United States.

As we have heard today—right now, as we speak, not 50 years ago—the Cuban regime harbors fugitives from American law, including cop killers and terrorists. What is President Obama's answer? "No problem, we will normalize relations."

The Cuban regime has an active espionage network against the interests of the United States. What is the President's answer to that? "No problem, we will normalize. You can continue to do that."

The Cuban regime shot down two American airplanes in international airspace; and for the people who are in prison, including one who was in prison for conspiracy to murder, not only is it okay—no problem, we will normalize—but no. We will send them back. You can go back home.

Mr. Speaker, the night is late, but I know and I am confident that, unlike President Obama, this Congress will continue to stand firm with the cause of freedom and the cause of a free Cuba, even while President Obama does not.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. DIAZ-BALART. You so eloquently stated that. We have so much to say, and we have run out of time.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind Members not to refer to guests on the floor of the House.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 37, PROMOTING JOB CREATION AND REDUCING SMALL BUSINESS BURDENS ACT; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 185, REGULATORY ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2015; AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 240, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 114-2) on the resolution (H. Res. 27) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 37) to make technical corrections to the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, to enhance the ability of small and emerging growth companies to access capital through public and private markets, to reduce regulatory burdens, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 185) to reform the process by which Federal agencies analyze and formulate new regulations and guidance documents; and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 240) making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

AMERICA'S FREE TRADE DEFICIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) until 10 p.m.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to paint a picture of U.S. job loss resulting from our trade policies extending back now almost three decades.

I rise because America has a huge "good jobs" deficit because we have a gigantic trade deficit. That means more imports come in here than our exports go out, largely because markets and other places are closed. Our workers and our communities have paid a tremendous price for this.

I oppose any further NAFTA-like trade agreements, such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which the administration is proposing. That will ship out more U.S. jobs. We have had enough. The American people have had enough.

Since 1975, when Wall Street's free trade job outsourcing roulette began, America has amassed a \$9.3 trillion trade deficit with the world. If you look at this chart, we have on here every single trade agreement that was signed and all of the lost jobs that resulted from the growing trade deficits we are amassing with countries around the world. This has never happened before over our history in the United States of America. It is a very serious problem.

The staggering loss of productivity associated with this deficit translates into a huge job loss here at home. In fact, that \$9.3 trillion of accumulated trade deficit of more imports coming in here than exports going out has actually cost us over 47,500,000 lost American jobs.

Most of those were really good jobs that paid living wages, jobs that just evaporated from our communities, jobs that were shipped to Mexico or to China, Korea, Bangladesh, Honduras, Guatemala, Turkey, El Salvador—everywhere in the world—largely to the Third World, and, frankly, to undemocratic countries where workers are treated like a bonded class.

Our workers, no matter how loyal or hardworking, became expendable as this began. In fact, they were treated like expendable widgets. What is being hurt in the process is the belief of the public that the value of hard work has any meaning. There are some workers who have simply dropped out.

Yes, American jobs are being outsourced year after year—for over a quarter century now—and workers are being treated like a game of musical chairs. Our jobs have been shipped out to penny-wage sweatshops hidden behind the Iron Curtain of anonymous towns in distant places most Americans will never visit. Anonymity, exploitation, and hidden squalor are as fundamental to free trade as the hollowing out of American jobs, our communities, and our middle class.

Those who exploit workers in our country and globally believe they are so powerful that the American people won't be able to rein them in, and they think this Congress will continue to behave as it did before, despite the evidence that this doesn't work for the American people.

Some of those very powerful interests are asking for another Fast Track trade deal to do it all over again in something called the Trans-Pacific Partnership, on an even bigger scale, including nations with the grossest violations of basic human rights.

Let me turn first to the broken promises of NAFTA, which was really the fundamental agreement passed—over my objections—in the early 1990s and another agreement, CAFTA, that dealt with Central America. Fast-forward to this past summer when thousands of migrant children from Central America swarmed our southern border. Remember that?

The American press acted surprised upon their arrival, and some people even threw tomatoes at buses that carried children from one detention facility to another.

These children had lived under 20 years of NAFTA and CAFTA in Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. They had experience with the NAFTA trade agreement and the CAFTA trade agreement, which covers those countries, trade agreements that were sold as opportunities that would rise the tide of all boats, of all workers.

What happened? Here in the United States, we had a huge loss of jobs to those countries, and Mexico's and Central America's infrastructures were not modernized. Their standard of living was not raised.

In fact, the promise that those countries somehow would turn into stylistically rustic versions of the American consumer market never happened. They were told new jobs would abound, but our Nation began to hemorrhage jobs to Mexico as wages in Mexico and throughout Central America began to drop. Those deficits became part of the overall total.

The problem is that in most of these countries where the free trade agreements were signed, what you see happening is more goods coming in here than our goods going out, a little trickle going to some places. In Mexico, what happened ever since NAFTA's passage was that we were promised trade balances. Every single year, it has gotten worse and worse and worse.

This week, the broken promises sold to the American public and their elected officials is that these agreements would really work. The people who voted for those agreements should pay some attention to the debate of trying to withhold funding for the Department of Homeland Security because of the President's action on immigration.

The stories of the youth being shipped back by the planeloads tell of families' lands being stolen from under them. The land was handed over to multinational corporate agricultural groups that come in and grow, for example, palm oil.

Local displaced farmers were forced into urban settings—desperate, in search of food, in search of work at factories where jobs that were promised in return for the land—guess what—never materialized. Here on our own continent, the children became the refugees of transnational economic policies that harmed the entire continent.

Hardly anyone even talked about that; but when you have this kind of disruption, when you have so much job loss, and when you have land, transferring title with millions of farmers disrupted from their way of life, what do we expect?

Millions of displaced people in Mexico and Central America living in the shadow of border plants and urban factories exist in a state of peonage that makes older versions of slavery look positively beneficent, squatting on poisoned ground in jerry-rigged plywood and tar paper shacks.

I have been in those shacks. I have gone to those places. When you do, you never forget it. Next door, water in gullies that surround these places is so polluted that communities smell of a rancid odor, and even chickens that they keep to try to feed themselves die from the drinking water. We have seen it. We have been there.

The displaced population on the run is surging, thanks in large part to NAFTA and CAFTA's agricultural provisions, those very flawed provisions